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**CLAIMS**

1. A method for defining a metadata structure relating to media materials, concepts and services, the method comprising the steps of:

5 defining a plurality of storage entities at a plurality of levels for metadata relating to media materials, concepts and services, the storage entities having a plurality of storage elements and being related with a media metadata subject grouping, and arranged in hierarchical and non-hierarchical relationships allowing an appropriate combination of elements as required;

10 storing metadata relating to a given storage entity in one of a plurality of storage elements of the entity at that level, each storage element representing an attribute or characteristic of the entity subject or media material;

15 arranging media metadata entities and attributes relating directly to the media material, concepts and services in hierarchical and non-hierarchical entity level relationships allowing an appropriate combination of elements are required; and

20 wherein for hierarchical entities, the storage elements of storage entities at a level apart from the lowest level, comprise the storage elements of the immediately lower storage level.

25 2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the storage entities include an editorial object concept entity which may give rise to one or more editorial object version entities, wherein the metadata stored within the editorial object concept entity is related to the editorial object version entity, the version entity comprising the  
30 immediately lower storage level.

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3. A method according to claim 2, wherein the storage entities include a programme version level and an item version level, the programme version level and the item version level being subtypes of the editorial object version.

4. A method according to claim 3, wherein the storage entities include a media object level, and the programme version and item version entities are related to media object metadata, the media objects comprising the immediate lower level.

5. A method according to claim 4, wherein the media object level includes occurrences of individual media types as sub types.

6. A method according to claim 5, wherein the media object includes an audio level subtype and the storage elements relate to audio metadata.

7. A method according to claim 5, wherein the media object level includes a text level sub-type and the metadata storage elements relate to text metadata.

8. A method according to claim 5, wherein the media object level includes a graphics level subtype and the media object level storage elements relate to graphics metadata.

9. A method according to claim 5, wherein the media object level includes a stills level subtype and the media object level storage elements relate to stills metadata.

10. A method according to claim 1, further comprising storing the entity and attribute definitions as a metadata dictionary, wherein metadata occurrences are defined to be consistent with the metadata dictionary.

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11. A method according to Claim 10, wherein the dictionary further includes acceptable synonyms for at least some of the metadata.

5 12. A method according to claim 1 further comprising defining a plurality of levels of business stores each comprising business elements each relating to business metadata, the business stores being linked to the metadata stores at a storage level dependent on the business element metadata.

10 13. A method according to claim 12, wherein one of the plurality of levels of business stores comprises a rights level comprising one or more related entities containing business metadata identifying legal rights attached to the media material, the business metadata including the legal  
15 jurisdiction of the right, the geographical territory of the right, the duration of the right and the owner of the right.

14. A method according to claim 1 wherein the media material is a radio, television or Internet material or associated or derived product.

20 15. A method according to claim 1, wherein the storage levels cover the distributed media supply chain extending from service proposition to audience consumption.

25 16. A method according to claim 1, comprising defining a plurality of mutually consistent hierarchies of storage levels.

17. A method of defining a standard media exchange framework comprising the steps of:

defining a media metadata structure according to the method of claim 1,

30 defining a process flow model reflecting the media production and distribution chain; and

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defining metadata items for exchange between one process in the media production and distribution chain and another.

18. A data structure for defining broadcast media metadata comprising:

a plurality of storage entities for metadata relating to media materials, concepts and services, the entities being arranged in storage levels and each entity comprising a plurality of storage elements each for storing metadata relating to a given entity, each storage element representing an attribute or characteristic of the entity subject or the media material;

wherein the storage levels are hierarchical and non-hierarchical allowing the appropriate combination of elements as required, where the levels are hierarchical, the storage elements of storage entities, apart from the lowest level, comprise the stores of the immediately lower storage level.

19. A structure according to claim 18, wherein the storage entities include an editorial object concept entity which may give rise to one or more editorial object version entities, wherein the metadata stored within the editorial object concept entity is related to the editorial object version entity, the editorial object version entity comprising the immediately lower storage level.

20. A structure according to claim 19, wherein the storage entities include an item version level and a programme version level, each of the item version level and the programme version level being subtypes of the editorial objection version entity.

21. A structure according to claim 20, wherein the programme version and item version entities relate to media

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object metadata, the media objects comprising the immediately lower level.

22. A structure according to claim 21, wherein the media object level includes occurrences of individual media types as subtypes.

23. A structure according to claim 22, wherein the media object level includes an audio level subtype and the storage elements relate to audio metadata.

24. A structure according to claim 22, wherein the media object level includes a text level subtype and the storage elements relate to text metadata.

25. A structure according to claim 22, wherein the media object level includes a graphics level and the storage elements relate to graphics metadata.

26. A structure according to claim 22, wherein the media object level includes a stills level and the media object level storage elements relate to stills metadata.

27. A structure according to claim 18, further comprising a metadata dictionary having stored therein entity and attribute definitions, wherein the metadata occurrences are defined to be consistent with the metadata dictionary.

28. A structure according to claim 27, wherein the dictionary further includes acceptable synonyms for at least some of the metadata.

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Sub A3 29. A structure according to any of claims 18 to 28 comprising entities relating to editorial requirements and entities relating to instantiation requirements.

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30. A structure according to claim 18 further comprising a plurality of levels of business entities each comprising storage elements related to business metadata, the business elements being linked to the media metadata entities at a storage level dependent on the business element metadata.

31. A structure according to claim 30, wherein one of the plurality of levels of business storage elements comprises a rights level and includes one or more entities containing business metadata identifying legal rights attached to the media material, the business metadata including the legal jurisdiction of the right, the geographical territory of the right, the duration of the right and the owner of the right.

32. A structure according to claim 18 wherein the media material is a radio, television or Internet material or associated or derived product.

33. A structure according to claim 18, wherein the storage levels cover the broadcast media supply chain extending from service proposition to audience consumption.

34. A structure according to claim 18, including a plurality of mutually consistent hierarchies of storage levels.

35. A data structure for defining media metadata comprising:

a plurality of storage entities for metadata relating to media production and distribution, the entities being arranged at storage levels and each entity comprising a plurality of storage elements each holding metadata relating to a given entity level, each storage element representing an attribute or characteristic of the entity subject or the media material;

a plurality of levels of business entities each comprising storage elements storing business metadata, the

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business entities being linked to the metadata stores at a storage level dependent on the business element metadata, one of the plurality of levels of business stores comprising a rights level and having one or more storage entities  
5 containing business metadata identifying legal rights attached to the media material, the business metadata including the legal jurisdiction of the right, the geographical territory of the right, the duration of the right and the owner of the right;

10 wherein the metadata storage levels are hierarchical and non-hierarchical and, for hierarchical storage levels, the metadata stored in the storage elements of storage entities at a level, apart from the lowest level comprise the stores of the immediately lower storage level.

15 36. A data structure for defining media metadata comprising:

a plurality of storage entities for metadata relating to media production and distribution, the entities being  
20 arranged at storage levels and each entity comprising a plurality of storage elements each holding metadata relating to a given entity level, each storage element representing an attribute or characteristic of the entity subject or the media material;

25 a rights store linked to at least one of the metadata stores and comprising one or more storage entities containing business metadata identifying legal rights attached to the media material, the business metadata including the legal jurisdiction of the right, the  
30 geographical territory of the right, the duration of the right and the owner of the right;

wherein the metadata storage levels are hierarchical and non-hierarchical and, for hierarchical storage levels, the metadata stored in the storage elements of storage  
35 entities at a level, apart from the lowest level, comprise the stores of the immediately lower storage level.